

Measure Now Heads to White House for President Obama's Signature

Washington, DC - The U.S. House of Representatives this week gave final approval to Congressman Maurice Hinchey's (D-NY) Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Designation Act. The measure, which was included as part of a major public lands bill, previously passed the Senate and is now headed to the White House where President Obama is expected to sign the measure into law. Hinchey authored the bill in order to designate the more than 600-mile path from Newport, Rhode Island to Yorktown, Virginia taken in 1781 by the armies of General George Washington and Count Rochambeau as a National Historic Trail. On that path, French troops joined General George Washington's command en route to defeating the British and winning the American Revolutionary War.

"It's taken a lot of work to get to this point, but I am very pleased that the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route has passed Congress and will finally be designated as a National Historic Trail," Hinchey said. "This designation will help spur a greater understanding of our history and provide people of all ages with the ability to retrace the footsteps taken by General George Washington and Count Rochambeau as part of the war that gave our country its independence. The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail will bring our history books to life and provide all visitors with a unique opportunity to learn about our country's rich history."

Hinchey's bill traces the more than 600-mile historic route through eight states: Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. Under the command of General George Washington, Continental forces joined the French force, which was led by General Jean-Baptiste de Rochambeau, outside New York City. On October 17, 1781, the combined armies defeated the British army with the help of a French fleet commanded by Admiral de Grasse. General Cornwallis' surrender that day at Yorktown ended major hostilities in the American Revolutionary War. Hinchey's bill also designates the trail that Washington's and Rochambeau's forces took back north after their victory in Yorktown.

The bill designates the route as a National Historic Trail, maps the route with educational signs, and gives administrative authority to the Secretary of the Interior. Additionally, the bill ensures that during the process of designating parts of the trail, that all private property rights are respected. The measure has the support of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Association.

Hinchey is the author of the bill that established the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in 1996. The Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area was established to recognize, preserve, protect and interpret the region's nationally significant historical, cultural, and natural resources. The National Park Service supports Hinchey's Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail Designation Act.